

PERS 75-278

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT : Review of the Single Grade Promotion Policy

1. This is in response to your request for a current review and revalidation of the policy that professional employees be promoted one grade at a time through grade GS-11.

2. The basic elements of the present promotion system were adopted years ago while the Agency was expanding rapidly and when most employees were assigned to positions one or more grades above their own. This encouraged a general practice of annual promotions and an overall promotion rate which exceeded the pace of advancement in most Federal agencies.

3. In an effort to bring promotions within more reasonable control under these circumstances, the Agency adopted the policy of promoting employees one grade at a time through the process of competitive selection among all members of a Career Service at a given grade, thereby using the grades of GS-08 and GS-10 for professionals -- a practice not followed elsewhere in government. Recognizing the need to husband headroom against the future needs of an expanding work force, these selections were made against limited quotas established within the total headroom available in the position structure. There were, however, time-in-grade guidelines, albeit differing among components. In these circumstances, competitive promotion by single grade steps made good sense, and did not interfere with the maintenance of desirable rates of advancement.

4. Although there has been no appreciable change in the above policies and practices, the Agency has for some years experienced steady reductions in personnel ceilings and faces quite different problems in managing promotions under current circumstances. Today, there is considerable evidence of shortcomings in the promotion system. Criticism of the single grade promotion policy arises frequently in circumstances which invite specific comparisons between our system and pay practices in other agencies.

For example, "Why should our young professional in a grade GS-09 position be promoted from GS-07 to GS-08 while the young DIA professional with identical duties is promoted from GS-07 to GS-09," or "Why promote a GS-09 who has been serving creditably in a GS-11 position for a year or more to GS-10?" The single grade promotion policy is also blamed for Agency promotion rates which are becoming recognized as unreasonably low. There is hard evidence that advancement is too slow. For example, the attached tabulation of information from the FY 1974 APP reports of certain DDA Career Sub-Groups shows very slow rates of progress for employees in the grade range GS-07 to GS-11, in spite of headroom which would have accommodated promotions more frequently. Unquestionably, people of the caliber of our young professionals have reason to expect more rapid advancement. In order for the Agency to keep pace, our managers must give up the habit of hoarding headroom and accord these upcoming professionals the status and pay which they have earned by their day-to-day performance.


5. The policy of promoting junior professionals by single grade steps is outdated. For some time the position structure has served to restrict rather than encourage promotions, and opportunities for promotion have depended almost entirely on turnover.

6. The Agency should discard the "single grade promotion policy" and adopt the following policies to govern the promotion of professionals through grade GS-11:

(a) Employees who are ranked as promotable through competitive selection and who are assigned to positions of higher grade shall be promoted to the grade of their assigned positions, except that no employee shall be promoted more than two grades at one time. (This would have the effect of eliminating the use of GS-08 and GS-10 for professionals.)

(b) Employees who are ranked promotable and are assigned for an established tour in a position of the same grade may be promoted with the commitment by their Career Service that, within two years or in the next assignment, whichever is sooner, they will be assigned to positions at levels to accommodate their higher grades.

7. If you concur, I will prepare an appropriate proposal for consideration at an early meeting of the CIA Management Committee.

  
R. W. M. Janney  
Director of Personnel

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Attachment

CONCUR:

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Deputy Director  
for  
Administration

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Date

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